

May 25, 2017

Better Healthcare for Albertans:

A Report by the Office of the Auditor General of Alberta

Auditor General identifies actions needed to improve Alberta’s healthcare system

Edmonton, Alberta—A report by Alberta’s auditor general affirms that the province’s long-standing goal of building an integrated healthcare system focused around the needs of the patient is the right approach, but there are inherent barriers in the current system preventing Albertans from receiving the best quality care possible.

Better Healthcare for Albertans: A Report by the Office of the Auditor General of Alberta offers an analysis of the root causes behind the lack of progress toward effective integration of healthcare in Alberta. It identifies opportunities based on models from other jurisdictions to take Alberta’s system to a higher level in a quantum leap rather than through incremental change and reorganization.

“Significantly better healthcare is within reach, and putting more money into the system is not the answer,” said Auditor General Merwan Saher. “Integrated healthcare is the framework used by the highest performing health systems in the world, but we need to overcome some key barriers that have prevented successive provincial governments from establishing this kind of system.”

Integrated healthcare has been the stated policy for healthcare in Alberta since the 1990s.

The report notes that the key building blocks are in place in Alberta, including the establishment of Alberta Health Services, but change is needed in three key areas:

- **System structure:** the appropriate participants performing appropriate roles
- **Integration of physicians with AHS and other providers:** more coordination with allied healthcare providers, and compensation and accountability built around quality care and health outcomes
- **Clinical information systems:** complete, rapid access to medical records by everyone in the system—including the patient—when and where it is needed

Better Healthcare for Albertans provides a detailed look at the characteristics of a high performing system, and highlights specific opportunities where Alberta must take action immediately if it is going to ever achieve integrated care.

“All the people in the system—the minister, government, all MLAs, healthcare providers and professionals, and individual Albertans—must act together immediately if we are to make a difference in the lives of Albertans,” Saher said. “The biggest change needed is for individual Albertans themselves to take a more active role and interest in managing every aspect of their health and their healthcare.”

“Alberta has a chance to build what has been shown to work best,” Saher said. “Albertans are paying for the best. Why would they not expect the best?”

Read the full report at www.oag.ab.ca.

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